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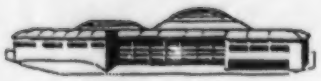

Report on 1999 Youth Parliament

May 17th - 21st, 1999
Yellowknife, NT

Summary

The first ever NWT-wide Youth Parliament was held on May 17th to 21st in Yellowknife. By all accounts the event was a success with 16 students participating, one from each of the 14 constituencies and two from Inuvik and Rae Lakes (the second student from these electoral districts served as Clerks).

The purpose of the event was to help students better understand how the Legislative Assembly and the legislative process work. To that end the overall goal was accomplished as during the critique at the end of the session all students said they now understood how the Assembly functions better than they had when they arrived.

A committee was established early in the new year to co-ordinate the Youth Parliament. Members included Laurell Graf, Ben Nind and Ronna Bremer and they were tasked with the development of the program, contacting the students and schools, finding sponsors or donations to carry out the program and making travel and accommodation arrangements. Erin McDonald came into the process when she was re-hired as the Public Relations Assistant for the summer months.

Prior to the NWT-wide Youth Parliament we also held two Parliaments with Grade 7 and 8 students from Mildred Hall Elementary School in Yellowknife. These two assemblies gave us, as staff and organizers, the opportunity to walk through the process ourselves and find out what worked and what didn't. These two assemblies focused more on the legislative process rather than the content of the debate whereas the NWT-wide Youth Parliament had both elements attached to it.

The following report has been prepared to look at the different aspects of the Youth Parliament and offer comments and suggestions on how the NWT-wide Youth Parliament could be improved in subsequent years.

As for developing a program for individual classes to hold a Youth Parliament that will require a different approach as there will be more emphasis put on the teachers and classes to prepare for the process.

Selection of Students

All high schools in the NWT were approached and asked to submit the names of two students who were interested in participating in the Youth Parliament. We asked students for a written submission on why they wanted to be involved and for a little more information on themselves. In

the case where we had more than one student from a constituency the Legislative Assembly team made the selection.

Response to our request was slow coming in although the communities of Holman, Rae Lakes and Kakisa Lake responded positively and quickly. One possible reason for the delay in responding was that some of the schools were either preparing for spring break or were actually on spring break around the time they received the letters. If possible in future years the letters should be sent out six months in advance if possible along with posters and the video from the previous year that could be displayed and shown to pique interest in the program. Follow-up to the letters should be done early in the new year.

Another possible reason could be that this was a new program the Legislature was unveiling so people weren't familiar with it. In future years we will be able to refer to the previous year's Parliament.

About a month after the letters and packages were sent out, phone calls were made to those schools we had not heard from. The general response was that they had not received the package or had thought they were packages for pages. Many of the packages had to be re-faxed to these schools and then additional follow-up was needed which again was a time-consuming process.

More follow-up on this might have provided more successful in recruiting applicants from all communities however, this is a time-consuming process that if it is to be adopted would require someone who could dedicate some time to this task. We could also look at recruiting MLAs to help promote the program.

Since this was the first Youth Parliament it may be easier to market in coming years as we can use the video from this year and the students involved in this year can help us promote it. It will also be easier to refer teachers in the future to the program since we have the initial Youth Parliament under our belts.

It was also found in the debriefing with the students following the Youth Parliament that most of the students were hand chosen by the schools and that the written submissions followed on the heels of this selection.

Students were also assigned the same role as that of their MLA in the Legislature meaning for example, that the student from the Deh Cho was the Speaker. However the students recommended that they would prefer to hold an election early in the Youth Parliament process so if that were to occur this would change the dynamics. It would also require more time

for the students to prepare ministers statements and questions. Ministers statements wouldn't necessarily be a concern as time could be allocated for the students to write these statements however with questions certain areas or issues would probably have to be assigned so that departments could prepare briefing notes on these topics in advance.

We recommend that the system of having students assume their MLAs' role in the Assembly used in the 1999 Youth Parliament be continued in future years.

Advance Preparation

Laurell made considerable efforts in the weeks prior to the students arrival in Yellowknife to help them prepare statements and questions and to gather a petition. Some of the students came to the Youth Parliament well prepared and showing that they had done a lot of work.

More work needs to be done preparing those students who will be Ministers in the Parliament and helping them to better understand the role of a Minister and how they are part of the Cabinet team. For example with this year's crop of Ministers the students all came with statements however most of them were Members' statements rather than Ministers so this slowed the process a bit in the early stages.

In time for the next Youth Parliament we should develop a package that clearly outlines in plain language what the role of a Minister is compared to that of a Member. We should also include some sample Minister and Member statements to help the students understand how they differ. Students should also be required to write both a Minister and Member statement so they are aware of the difference. The Fact Sheets contained in our LA information package already contains sheets on both the Executive and Members. Students also need to understand and accept that as Ministers they are part of a team and need to develop solidarity on issues.

We should also dedicate more time for the Ministers to meet as Cabinet and understand the role of a Minister more.

During the students critique of the event several identified that MLAs should assume a greater role in helping them prepare for the Youth Parliament by meeting with them, discussing constituency concerns and assisting them with writing statements. It was interesting to hear from students that MLAs should take on more of a role in helping them preparing for the Youth Parliament and perhaps their role and involvement should be more clearly defined in future events.

Considerable efforts were also spent in the areas of scheduling events, arranging accommodations and travel itineraries, and getting as much donated as possible.

In the future if a budget can be clearly identified for the Youth Parliament it would eliminate the need to spend so much time asking for donations although efforts should still be taken to get airline tickets donated due to the high cost of travel in the NWT. MLAs did contribute $100 each towards the Youth Parliament and the Speaker's office is paying any cost overruns.

Orientation to Legislature and Roles

This is one area of the Youth Parliament that went particularly well. The tour (including showing students where MLAs and Ministers work) and introductions to Legislative Assembly staff was the initial step in this process and helped students feel more comfortable and familiar with the building.

The next step was introducing the students to the "rules and procedures" in the House. Doing this early on was important to help give them a foundation of understanding how the Assembly operates. The Media Briefing Room worked fine for this part of the schedule however a lot more time should be spent on Committee of the Whole proceedings (see comments under The Session in this report).

Following the briefing and mock Legislature in the Media Briefing Room we continued with orientation of the roles of people in the Legislature. Some students commented that there was too much sitting around and talking on the opening day so perhaps in future years there may be some room for change in this area. For example if students spent time or had contact with their MLAs prior to coming to Yellowknife they would have a better understanding of what an MLA and a Minister does.

This means we could probably eliminate meeting with the MLAs and Ministers and just leave it with the Clerks and House Officers meeting with the students to explain their roles. This would allow us more time to actually work on statements and questions with the students and change the tone of the first day.

Once "MLAs" or "Ministers" start working on statements and questions it is important to take the student who is the Speaker out of the group and spend more time working on the job he/she will play.

The two students who were Clerks identified that they needed more time spent on learning what a Clerk does. There are differing opinions on whether Clerks should be eliminated from the process and just have the regular Clerks act as Clerks in the Youth Parliament. This is an area that needs further consideration before making a decision, however if students are to be Clerks more work is definitely needed on what a Clerk does and the role they play in the House, i.e. filling in paperwork, what to do on a recorded vote, etc.

Several of the participants had served as Pages in the Legislative Assembly and commented that they thought it helped prepare them better for the Youth Parliament. Perhaps in future years it might be an idea to tie the Youth Parliament with the Page program.

Bill Preparation

This again was another area that went fairly well from a preparation perspective in that the students knew what they were debating and the "cheat sheets" prepared for the students allowed them to walk through the process in the House virtually unassisted. Again the area where it fell short in was when the Bill was moved into Committee of the Whole and the Chairman didn't know what he was supposed to say to move the meeting along.

Perhaps we may want to look at preparing "cheat sheets" that could be provided to the Committee chair to help them move through the process much more easier and without so much assistance. We want the students to work through this process so the ultimate goal would be to not have any adults in the House when the Youth Parliament is on.

Having the GNWT staff sit with the Minister presenting the Bill also worked well and the issue selected was easy enough for the kids to debate. In the future however we may want to provide the students with the debate topic prior to their coming to Yellowknife so they can do a little research to use in the debate. Some of the students were intimidated and didn't want to speak in the debate but with a little advance preparation they may be more willing to participate. We could also have some material on hand that students could use in preparing for the debate. For example with the bicycle helmet debate the number of injuries from bike accidents, legislation from other jurisdictions, etc.

Another suggestion from one of the organizers was to include the draft Bill in the preparation package and then the students could work with their classes (i.e. constituencies) to prepare some ideas and comments

for the debate. This would allow the students to feel as if they are bringing a message with them from their constituents.

The "Sitting"

All in all most aspects of the session went well with students delivering their statements and other documents on time and as planned. The lone exception was Committee of the Whole where it was obvious not enough time was spent on the "administrative process" of the Bill. The tapes will clearly show the Deputy Clerk leading the students, and in particular, the Chairman through the process by telling him what to say. The debate and commentary of the students was fine it was just the process that was not clearly understood. Again the cheat sheets may help with this process.

Students also identified Committee of the Whole as one problem area where they felt more time needed to be spent on to ensure that they fully understood the process and language and terminology to be used.

In future Youth Parliaments we recommend that more time be spent with all students in Committee of the Whole. Walking the students through the process will help immensely and will provide the students with the tools to work through COW with much less guidance.

In this year's Parliament each student asked one set of questions to one Minister however in future years it would be advisable to have students ask more than one set of questions each to prolong the sitting. Several students also said they would like to spend more time in the House so that could mean extending the day or perhaps adding a second day in the House. This would mean more work for both students and organizers however organizers agree that a second day would be beneficial in helping the students clearly understand the House process.

It would also be advisable to bring in resource people such as the Legislative Co-ordinator and his/her staff and Clerks earlier into the process so that they too share the responsibility for the Youth Parliament and have input from the early stage. It will spread the work around and provide the students with more resource people to rely on.

In future years it is also important to recognize when things appear to be falling apart or the students are confused on an issue that they can take a five minute break and get things back under control. As Members all students need to know that they have the right to call for a break.

Social Events and General Comments

A lot of effort went into planning extra-curricular events for the students, MLAs and staff involved in the Youth Parliament. Most of the activities were well received with many students and MLAs participating in the majority of events. The first night icebreaker was just that a good icebreaker that forced students and MLAs to work together on a project and allowed them to get to know each other a little better.

Several students commented on the Members attendance and participation and in future years more efforts by all Members to be present for the Youth Parliament would be appreciated.

The inability to find billets for all the students forced organizers into finding an alternative arrangement so the Members' Lounge became girls' dormitory. Interestingly enough several students identified this as a positive for them and felt that all students should stay together - having a boys' dormitory and a girls' dormitory. This could be an option that may be explored in future years however it will increase the number of supervisors needed to stay with the students each night.

The students staying at the Legislature didn't welcome the 10:00 p.m. curfew but organizers felt it was fair and reasonable during the week. The last night it was extended to 11:30 p.m. and all students respected it.

Organizers also feel it is important to keep students occupied at nights to alleviate any potential problems from brewing up at night.

Budget

No specific budget was allocated for this year's Youth Parliament instead it was left to organizers to see what they could pull together. Most of the airline tickets were donated and many other donations and contributions were also made to the program however in future years perhaps a budget should be identified for the Youth Parliament. Members did contribute $100 each but it still was short.

A copy of a proposed budget has been attached to the back of this report for consideration in future years.

Recommendations

Organizers of the 1999 Youth Parliament recommend:

- that the NWT-wide Youth Parliament becomes an annual event;
- the last week of April be declared "Youth Parliament Week" at the NWT Legislative Assembly;
- that a budget of at least $6,000/year be identified for the Youth Parliament providing airline tickets are donated otherwise the budget will need to be much higher - perhaps a shared contribution from the Legislative Assembly and MLAs (be asked to contribute $250 from their Constituency Budget);
- tie the Page program with the Youth Assembly so that students have worked as pages and are familiar with the Assembly;
- have all students write Member and Minister statements, collect a petition and consult with their classes on the proposed Bill prior to coming to Yellowknife;
- identify an issue for a bill and inform the students in advance to allow them to prepare for the debate;
- prepare a more detailed package with specific information on the role of a Minister, Member, Glossary, etc. to be sent to students once they are selected to participate in the Youth Parliament;
- send out letters and posters to schools in November to promote the Youth Parliament;
- set a January 31st deadline for applications to the Youth Parliament to enable enough time for preparation work with the students;
- maintain the system of having students adopt the same role that their MLA plays in the Legislature;
- review the accommodations situation to determine the best approach - students were strongly in favor of the dormitory idea but is it feasible in this building;
- encourage students to attend constituency meetings, community meetings and speak with people in the community on issues;
- encourage MLAs to take a much more active role in preparing the students for the Youth Parliament and contact their students;
- facilitate a training workshop for Legislative Assembly/Executive staff so all staff know how to run a Youth Parliament - share the load and responsibility;
- have an individual assigned to video tape behind the scene events to record this data;
- bring in Legislative Co-ordinator and his staff, Clerks, and other GNWT staff into the process once students have been selected;
- spend more time working through Committee of the Whole process so students are thoroughly familiar and comfortable with this aspect of the proceedings;

- add a second day in the House for the students;
- above all remember that this is a learning process for the students and do not rush it just to meet deadlines;

All things considered organizers felt that the 1999 Youth Parliament was a success for a first time attempt. There are some areas that have been identified as needing improvement in order to ensure that the Youth Parliament runs smoothly and that the students get the maximum benefit and understanding out of the process.

Budget Breakdown

Income

$100 from each of 14 MLAs	1400

1999 Estimated Expenditures

Vans	200
Catering	300
Airline tickets	400
Miscellaneous (food, supplies, entertainment, etc.)	1000
Photo developing/film	500
Thank you ad	300
Videotapes	250
Total	**$2950**

- It is important to keep in mind when considering these costs that all but two airline tickets were donated as were many other activities and supplies. The total for the donated items for the 1999 Youth Parliament was probably **about $8000** so if those costs were incurred in future years it would probably put the cost of the Youth Parliament at closer to $11,000.

- These costs are estimates and are not actual costs incurred for the 1999 Youth Parliament.

- These costs do not include the staff and overtime hours required to plan the Youth Parliament, both prior to and during the event.

List of Sponsors - 1999 Youth Parliament

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Dept. of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development

Dept. of Education, Culture and Employment

Dept. of Transportation

NWT Housing Corporation

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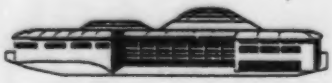

YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

1st SESSION

1st Assembly

HANSARD
Official Report

DAY 1

THURSDAY, MAY 20, 1999

Pages 1 - 20

Speaker: The Hon. Terry Simba, Student M.L.A.

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YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

THURSDAY, MAY 20, 1999

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Babyn, Ms. Boucher, Honourable Jill Chinna, Honourable Wanda Grandjambe, Honourable Melanie Kimiksana, Honourable Shelly Lemon, Ms. Mantla, Honourable Lana Nahanni, Ms. Pascal, Mr. Peart, Honourable Terry Simba, Ms. Smith, Honourable Andrea Tam, Mr. Unka.

ITEM 1: PRAYER

Oh, God, may your spirit and guidance be in us as we work for the benefit of all our people, for peace and justice in our land and for the constant recognition of the dignity and aspirations of those whom we serve. Amen.

MADAM SPEAKER (Hon. Terry Simba): Thank you. Orders of the day. Item 2, Minister's statements. Ms. Nahanni.

ITEM 2: MINISTERS' STATEMENTS

Minister's Statement 1-1(1): Future of the Northwest Territories

HON LANA NAHANNI: Future of the Northwest Territories. Madam Speaker, as all Members are aware, this is a time of change in the Northwest Territories. The creation of two new territories in Canada's north marks an exciting time for people in both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. We offer best wishes to the people of Nunavut, however, it is now time for this government to turn its focus to the needs of the people of the new Northwest Territories.

The first issue that we need to deal with is naming the new Northwest Territories. It is time to resolve this issue once and for all. As leaders, it us up to us to provide leadership on this issue. To that end, I am pleased to announce that the government will have a Premier's forum to hear what northerners think the name of the Territories should be. Depending on the input to the forum, the government will then move forward with a public vote. Madam Speaker, we believe that this is an important step and will show the people that we are moving ahead. I believe this decision shows that our government is prepared and determined to deal with the difficult and emotional issues.

Equally important, we are committed to strengthening our partnerships with aboriginal peoples and governments. I have instructed my staff to work directly with aboriginal governments to make sure that land claims and self-government agreements are signed in all regions. As all Members are aware, land claims put control back in the hands of the aboriginal people and, at the same time, give aboriginal people the financial resources to renew the lives of people in the region.

One other issue we cannot neglect, the health and social well-being of all people in the NWT. Alcohol and drug abuse is a well-known problem in the north and is a drain on our budget. We have recognized that something needs to be done. I am pleased to inform Members that alcohol and drug treatment centres will be built in each region of the Northwest Territories over the next five years.

--Applause

This will greatly reduce the number of people suffering from abuse of alcohol and drugs and will lead to a healthier society.

Madam Speaker, we must also make a commitment to our youth and children. We want to ensure all our children live in homes that are safe and free of violence. We need them to get a good education through our school system, their elders, and other role models in our communities. We must ensure that all residents have access to excellent health care, no matter where we live. Madam Speaker, we know that this is a time of change in the NWT, however, it is also a time of opportunity. There are opportunities in oil and gas development, tourism, diamonds, transportation initiatives and forestry, just to name a few. It is now up to the people of the NWT to take these opportunities and make them happen. The future is ours, Madam Speaker. Mahsi Cho.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Nahanni. Minister's statements. Ms. Lemon.

Minister's Statement 2-1(1): Western Arctic Leadership Program

HON. SHELLY LEMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today I would like to bring to your attention the Western Arctic Leadership Program in Fort Smith. The program consists of regular high school classes and two-hour study hall with a tutor from Sunday to Thursday. Extra-curricular activities such as camping, volunteer work within the community, and the Dream Catchers Conference held in Edmonton are also an integral part of the leadership program. Students must go through an application process to be accepted to this program. The graduates of the program usually go on to complete post-secondary education.

Hon. Stephen Kakfwi, Mr. Richard Nerysoo, and Hon. Michael Miltenberger are just a few graduates who have come back in leadership roles within our government. As you can see, many of these graduates have been very successful and important in the development of our territory. Not all of the Western Arctic Leadership graduates are involved in the government. Some play influential roles in the communities as teachers, lawyers, doctors and other valuable community members.

For a period of time the leadership program was discontinued. The present Western Arctic Leadership Program has been in existence for ten years and is funded on a year-to-year basis. Funding ensures that the students who are attending the program in Fort Smith have food, tutors and house parents. The

funding also provides them with the opportunity to go camping all year-round to learn survivor skills, first aid, and to receive their firearms certificates. The students who attend the leadership program come from many communities and have the opportunity to get an enhanced high school education. The residence for the program is the Madonna House.

The staff and students of the Western Arctic Leadership Program have approached this government for funds to replace old and unsafe camping equipment. The program has a lot to offer and has been very successful in the past. I have instructed this department to address all the deficiencies in this program. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Lemon. Minister's statements. Ms. Kimiksana.

Minister's Statement 3-1(1): Community Government

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In order for the people in our northern communities to become independent from the Government of the Northwest Territories, there must be the development of community governments. This is the only way people will learn to help themselves. People must feel that they have ownership of their lives.

The communities of the Northwest Territories have many problems they are facing. There is lack of funding for all the programs and the training people require. Added onto this, we have social problems which include alcohol abuse and child neglect. Communities also have to deal with self-government and land claims issues. Communities need help to develop independence.

The department offers training and leadership programs through the School of Community Government. There is training and assistance for community sport and recreation programs. At this time, the department is also looking at ways to give responsibility for some of the programs that are presently run by MACA to the communities. This will allow communities to have ownership over their community activities.

Madam Speaker, the problems of the Northwest Territories can only be solved by the people. The people of the Northwest Territories can only begin to solve their problems when they assume responsibility for them. This responsibility will come through the development of community governments. The department is making every effort to assist the communities in developing their community governments. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Kimiksana. Minister's statements. Ms. Grandjambe.

Minister's Statement 4-1(1): The New Wildlife Act

HON. WANDA GRANDJAMBE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to update Members regarding changes to the Wildlife Act. Our present act was developed in 1979 based on extensive public consultation. Since 1979, there have been additions to the act to deal with land claims agreements in the NWT. Although the Wildlife Act has been revised to recognize and give effect to the wildlife harvesting and management provision of the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, and Sahtu Land Claims Agreements, inconsistencies still remain between the act and the agreements.

The original part of the act, or part 1, which applies to all persons in the NWT, has had no major changes made since its implementation 20 years ago. It is outdated and does not reflect some of the provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The enforcement and administration sections require updating. The licensing framework has loopholes when we deal with new commercial renewable resource harvesting. Madam Speaker, over the next few months, the department will develop a discussion paper for dialogue with stakeholders and communities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Grandjambe. Minister's statements. Ms. Tam.

Minister's Statement 5-1(1): Need for New Revenue

HON. ANDREA TAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The 1998-99 fiscal year ended with a surplus. Even so, the 1999-2000 fiscal year is expected to spend $34 million more than we will earn. The 1999-2000 budget for the new Northwest Territories is $742 million. Madam Speaker, we need to keep a balanced budget and avoid going back into serious debt. We can do this in many ways. For example, we must set our priorities and spend our money wisely. We have to look at receiving more value for each dollar we spend. Another way we can avoid going into debt is to develop new sources of revenue for our government. The government is actively reviewing our financial goals and objectives. We are making plans as to how to spend our money wisely.

There are also several ways the government can increase the revenue and offset the debts. As of January 1st, 2000, every commercial vehicle that uses that NWT highway system will pay a fee. This will offset the cost of building new roads and maintaining existing roads. Other ways to increase revenues are to raise taxes for cigarettes and take away subsidies for alcohol in the north. Therefore, each community in the NWT will pay the full cost for alcohol to be brought in. Besides paying the full cost for alcoholic beverages, taxes for alcohol will be increased. The revenue generated will be used to offset rising health care costs and to address the rising number of students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects.

We are also considering a proposal for a bingo tax. Under this scheme, a percentage of the profits made from each bingo game will be used to benefit our overall budget. Details are being worked out on this new initiative. When the quirks are worked out, I will pass the information to each Member of the House. Also, we are developing an amendment to the Payroll Tax Act which will increase the amount of tax payable by non-resident workers from one percent to 20 percent. This is so money made in the north stays in the north. In conclusion, Madam Speaker, to ensure stability in our economy, we must make sure government spending is well-managed and within budget. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Tam. Minister's statements. Ms. Chinna.

Minister's Statement 6-1(1): Recruitment and Retention of Health Professionals

HON. JILL CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to speak on the issue of recruitment and retention of health service professionals, particularly nurses. Today in the NWT, we face many challenges in the line of health and social service professions. Internationally, our country as a whole is suffering from a nursing shortage. It has been foretold that in the year 2011 we will have a mass shortage of 130,000 nurses. With that in mind, consider all the sickness and diseases that will go untreated and uncured. Some diseases, if left untreated, will result in an early death.

More than ever before, there is a need for properly educated nurses throughout the world. This has resulted in a competition for nursing professions. Other provinces and territories are attempting to mend their problems of recruitment by announcing salary increases for nurses.

With more and more nurses leaving their jobs in northern communities, it makes it harder for the remaining staff to complete their duties. Nonetheless, we must maintain our high quality nurses for the future of our people and land. The government recognizes the fact that it must take action. They would like everybody to know that we are committed to the well-being of our territory. The department is exploring options such as raising salaries, increasing benefits, and providing professional development, as well as encouraging northerners to enter and specialize in this field. We look forward to input from all Members of this House. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Chinna. Minister's statements. Ms. Nahanni.

Minister's Statement 7-1(1): Free Vote on Bill 1

HON. LANA NAHANNI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Later today, the Minister of Transportation will introduce a bill to amend the Motor Vehicles Act. The amendment will make the use of helmets mandatory while riding bicycles. This issue is controversial. The bill before this committee challenges us to make a choice between the right of individuals to make decisions regarding their own safety and the responsibility of government to protect the people and set standards for safety. This kind of choice is a moral dilemma and, accordingly, I wish to advise Members that I am allowing a free vote on this issue. Ministers will not be bound by Cabinet solidarity and will be able to vote according to their conscience. Mahsi Cho. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Nahanni. Minister's statements. Item 3, Members' statements. Mr. Unka.

ITEM 3: MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Member's Statement 1-1(1): Survey at Diamond Jenness Secondary School, Hay River

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, recently in my constituency of Hay River, a survey was conducted at our local high school of Diamond Jenness Secondary School. The survey stated two main questions which were, what do you think Diamond Jenness Secondary School needs or what would you like to see? The second question was, what do you think the town of Hay River needs or what would you like to see?

Madam Speaker, approximately 213 responses were received from students in Diamond Jenness. Throughout Diamond Jenness, students ranging from grades 7 to twelve participated in the survey.

After receiving all the surveys, 146 students requested that extracurricular activities and course option be a priority for funds allocated to these needs of the students. The extracurricular activities include sports, more course selection, more technology and trade options including automotive.

One hundred and seventeen students requested other choices, which include renovations of the school premises, items such as new desks, more supplies, painting of the facility, cafeteria, shop supplies and, most important, air conditioning. The remainder of the students requested for more teacher per teacher/student ratio.

For the second part of the survey, 114 students requested a facility to basically hang out and have a good time, for instance, a coffee shop or a youth recreational centre. Other issues were a shopping centre with more youth-oriented clothing, more fast food facilities, and more family restaurants. The remainder within the survey would like to see more sidewalks built and a bike trail established. To conclude, Madam Speaker, I will be asking the government to allocate more money to the constituency of Hay River, especially towards education and town facilities. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Unka. Member's statements. Ms. Pascal.

Member's Statement 2-1(1): Expansion of Gymnasium at Chief Julius School, Fort McPherson

MS. PASCAL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Recently the youth along with some of the members of my community have been talking about the size of our school gymnasium. It would be great to see an expansion on our school gym because of its existing size. The original school was totally destroyed by fire in 1995, had a full-size gym and included a stage. We were able to host regional tournaments, various large gatherings, assemblies. We always had excellent turnouts when we had monthly assemblies along with the above mentioned events. All this was possible because there was enough room to accommodate everyone comfortably. All the space and comfort of our gymnasium was taken away when we lost our old school to fire.

Presently, the gymnasium that exists was downsized when our new school was built. The gymnasium stage was removed altogether. This happened because there was not any money to build a stage when construction was taking place. We do have a balcony in our gymnasium but still it is crowded and always standing room only. Most of the time spectators are forced to crowd outside the gym to catch a glimpse of what is happening inside. On many occasions, a temporary podium or stage had to be built to assist with the annual Christmas plays, graduation, etcetera, then was later disassembled. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Pascal. Member's statements. Ms. Mantla.

Member's Statement 3-1(1): Funding for Healing Centre, Faber Lake

MS. MANTLA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Rae Lakes was, for a long time, a hunting and fishing area for our people, the Dogrib. It became a new settlement or hamlet in the 1960's when six families decided to move from Rae. This hamlet of Gameti now has 250 people, mostly descendants of the six original families. Those families are the Mantlas, the Wetrades, the Tailbones, the Arrowmakers, the Apples, and the Gons. We have come a long way concerning worldly goods; homes, trucks, skidoos, etcetera. But we want to keep our ways in culture and in language.

We are, therefore, asking you, the government for funds to cover expenses for our cultural and healing center at Faber Lake, NWT. At this center, we will need elders to teach the old ways and some people to teach the new ways, strong like two people. This center could serve the whole Dene Nation. The initial cost of this center will be $600,000. This will include a bunkhouse for 24 people, a recreation room, a dining room, and a classroom. The yearly operational cost will be $100,000 for salaries, food, equipment and other necessities. The Dogrib from Gameti are counting on you. The Dene Nation is counting on you. Ladies and gentlemen, the Dene Nation language must survive. Thank you very much. Mahsi cho.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Mantla. Member's statements. Ms. Boucher.

Member's Statement 4-1(1): Recreation Centre In Fort Resolution

MS. BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Fort Resolution is the oldest community in the Northwest Territories. We are very fortunate to have a strong community spirit that comes from generations and generations of community people working together. I was very fortunate to be born in such a community. Having lived there all my life, I know what is most needed to support the youth of my community.

Madam Speaker, there was a priority of past governments of putting an arena and recreation facilities into each community and I commend the vision of these past governments. The elders' biggest concerns are keeping the teenagers and children from getting involved with drugs and alcohol. They believe that this is a good opportunity for the community, and so did the government of the past.

That, Madam Speaker, is the reason why past governments have invested millions of dollars in recreational facilities. Money invested into recreation facilities is money invested in the future of our youth. I believe, and so does the community, that the government cannot do everything for everyone. We were raised and taught to be self-reliant and independent, and that is why you will not see me stand up in the House, hat in hand, asking for a government handout.

My community is willing to invest in the future of our youth. What we need from this government is the political and financial support to assist my people in Fort Resolution to achieve what they want to do. That is to build a new recreation center so our youth can spend quality time in the community. In closing, Madam Speaker, as the MLA from Tu Nedhe, I am fully committed to working with this government and the people of Fort Resolution to come up with positive solutions so within three years, I can invite all Members of the Legislative Assembly to join us in Fort Resolution to help celebrate the opening of our new recreation facility. Mahsi cho.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Boucher. Member's statements. Mr. Peart.

Member's Statement 5-1(1): Slow Emergency Services at Stanton Regional Hospital, Yellowknife

MR. PEART: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the hospitals are a place where people can get help. After being there Saturday and talking to many people, I realize that there is a problem. Waiting is most inevitable, but the waits are outrageously long. A young boy went in there with a broken finger and they told him and his mom it was going to be three hours. Three hours to get a broken finger fixed. This person saw the nurses doing nothing but walking around with their hands in their pockets. This kid could have taken five minutes to fix, but instead they were walking around doing nothing with rooms open.

Madam Speaker, I am not here to criticize because without the help of the hospitals, people who need help would suffer needlessly, but the waits are simply too long. A woman told me her sick baby was there for eight hours. A sick baby was there for eight hours. Madam Speaker, by looking at this issue, it makes me wonder, is the government allowing laziness when people are injured, or is the government ready to do something about it? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Peart. Member's statements. Ms. Smith.

Member's Statement 6-1(1): Yellowknife Students Meet With Local Elders

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise today to talk about the International Year of the Older Persons. This is a year in which, all around the world, we celebrate the elders in our communities. Recently at St. Pat's High School each TAP class had the honour of meeting with an elder of Yellowknife. We sat and talked and learned more about our guest. Later, we had some tea and cookies. It was a great learning experience as we had the opportunity to ask questions and find out more about the person. It is not really recognized how much the older people of our communities have to contribute. I, myself, took for the granted the knowledge that they had, because they have been around for a while and have witnessed many changes that Yellowknife and Canada have undergone throughout the years. Learning and interacting more with them may help us understand more about the history of our town and from a more personal point of view. I would like to say these experiences are very beneficial to both sides as the youth have a chance to interact and learn to appreciate the elders of our communities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

-Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Smith. Member's statements. Mr. Babyn.

Member's Statement 7-1(1): Arsenic Cleanup at Giant Mine

MR. BABYN: I stand before you today to speak to the issue of the arsenic cleanup at Giant Mine in Yellowknife. Ever since Giant Mine opened in the 1940's, there has been an accumulation of arsenic stored in underground vaults at the mine site. Our failure to deal with this toxic substance has come to a critical point, and we must take action. Although it is understood that it is the federal government's responsibility to get this cleanup underway, we need to develop a plan to deal with this issue. The impact of an arsenic spill will have grave results in our water supply and our resources. We cannot wait for others to make decisions about our environment as the others involved seem to be prepared to play a waiting game. If we take this problem on, there could actually be some opportunities and economic benefits for the people of the north. By developing a comprehensive cleanup plan and delivering it to the federal government, we can ensure that the cleanup is done effectively and that all employment and financial benefits are retained in the north. We have heard estimates of up to $250 million to clean the remaining arsenic and that there is potential salvage up to 120 ounces of gold. For these reasons alone, we should be prepared to capture this opportunity. As we have heard so often, this government needs new income to survive, so this undertaking also meets this need.

The environmental benefits are equally compelling with the health of all northerners at risk. We must make sure that this issue never has to be dealt with again. If we do even this one thing, we have done more than all the governments that have come before us dealing with this issue. If we are people of the land, and if we are people of opportunity, we have to take this task on, and if this task is not taken on, I am sure that I can say that this potentially dangerous situation will become dangerous and will result in disaster. There are so many reasons why we should take up this project and very few reasons why we should not. With the support of the northerners and of the federal government, I am sure that the cleanup of the arsenic at Giant Mine will be successful, but we have to act fast. Waiting for another 50 odd years or any shorter, for that matter, is unrealistic and unsafe. Madam Speaker, are we prepared to do something to benefit all northerners or will we allow this to remain a federal issue? Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Babyn. Before we go on any further, I would like to make a statement. Good morning, honourable Members, Ministers, visitors, media and staff. As Speaker, I would like to welcome you to the Chamber of the Legislative Assembly for the first NWT Youth Parliament. We have been working very hard for the past three days and we should all remember this day forever as a once-in-a-lifetime chance for all of us as young people to both learn and participate in the process of public government.

We have earned our way to sit in the home of the Government of the Northwest Territories and so far, it has been a memorable experience. As the Speaker of the Youth Parliament, I ask you to follow the rules of this House and advice you that I will be very strict in their enforcement. I ask you to respect each other, I ask you to share the good work that you have done and to listen closely to the words of your fellow MLAs. Please do not forget to be loud and clear - but most of all to have fun. When looking at the orders of the day, I notice that there is a lot of work to be done. It is part of our duties to get down to the business of the House.

We will continue with the orders of the day. Item 4, returns to oral questions. Ms. Nahanni.

ITEM 4: RETURN TO ORAL QUESTIONS

Return To Oral Question 1-1(1): Summer Student Employment Policy

HON. LANA NAHANNI: Madam Speaker, thank you. I have a return to an oral question asked by Ms. Smith on March 29th, 1999, regarding summer student employment policy. The government of the NWT implemented the Summer Student Employment Program in 1988. This program is delivered by Corporate Human Resource Services. The program provides a central agency where students submit their resumes for consideration for summer employment. The resumes are entered into a database that is available to all departments. The program ensures that all returning summer students are given equal opportunity for securing summer employment with the GNWT. The database also assists in matching qualified students with suitable and relevant summer employment.

The Summer Student Employment Program provides a central resume drop- off to students returning to the NWT. All departments can access the central registry and hire students listed in the registry. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Nahanni. Return to oral questions. Ms. Tam.

Return To Oral Question 2-1(1): Rates of Pay for Student

Summer Employment

HON. ANDREA TAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Mr. Babyn on May 14th, 1999, regarding rates of pay for summer student employment.

The GNWT is only able to institute a new student summer employment wage rate through the collective bargaining process with the union. We did, in fact, put forth a proposal for new student rates with the union in our most recent round of collective bargaining. However, agreement on this issue was not reached.

Students access jobs through the Casual Employment Program. Although there is no centralized database regarding the number of potential student job opportunities, the Corporate Human Resource Services have informed us that approximately 72 students have been hired in headquarters as of May 14th, 1999. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Ms. Tam. Returns to oral questions. Item 5, recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Peart.

ITEM 5: RECOGNITION OF VISITORS IN THE GALLERY

MR. PEART: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize a few people in the gallery today. First off, I would like to recognize my MLA, Mr. Seamus Henry. Second, my mom, she is sitting right there, my step-mom, she is sitting right there, and Ros, right there, and Erin. I think they both work at the Legislature. I would also like to recognize the Caribou Queen, Hilda Camirand, she is in the gallery.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to recognize my MLA, Mr. Jake Ootes, who is sitting up in the gallery, as well as the Yellowknife Mayor, Dave Lovell. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Smith.

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to recognize my MLA, Mr. Roy Erasmus. I would also like to recognize Mayor David Lovell. Welcome to the Assembly.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Mr. Unka.

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to recognize my MLA, Mrs. Jane Groenewegen. She is up there in the gallery. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Pascal.

MS. PASCAL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to welcome my MLA, Mr. Krutko. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Tam.

HON. ANDREA TAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to recognize my MLA, Mr. Charles Dent. He is sitting in the visitor's gallery. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Welcome. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Nahanni.

HON. LANA NAHANNI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to recognize all the staff of the Legislative Assembly in the gallery and thank them for being so helpful over the past few days. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Welcome. Recognition of visitors in the gallery. Ms. Boucher.

MS. BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to recognize my MLA, Mr. Don Morin, and Ms. Ronna Bremer, who are sitting in the gallery.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Recognition of visitors in the gallery. To everyone else who has not been recognized, welcome. Item 6, oral questions. Ms. Smith.

ITEM 6: ORAL QUESTIONS

Question 3-1(1): Political and Constitutional Development

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I have a question directed to the Premier concerning the political and constitutional development of the NWT. Division has passed, and we must start to build our own identity. We have to think about the future of development of our territory. The flag, coat of arms, mace and name are all concerned. Madam Speaker, constitutional development of the NWT has been a make-work project for the past 30-plus years. I have heard of groups like the Constitutional Alliance, the Constitutional Working Group and the Bourque Commission, all who have, even before I was born, been working on our identity which leaves me to ask the Premier that since division, exactly what has the government accomplished in terms of developing a northern identity for the NWT? Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: The Premier, Ms. Nahanni.

Return to Question 3-1(1): Political and Constitutional Development

HON. LANA NAHANNI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The government has made a great deal of progress in the development of an identity for the Northwest Territories. The Special Committee on Western Identity has been working very hard and has made great headway. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Ms. Smith.

Supplementary To Question 3-1(1): Political and Constitutional Development

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to ask the Premier that, with all this work being done, when do we see the results of all this work? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Nahanni.

Further Return To Question 3-1(1): Political and Constitutional Development

HON. LANA NAHANNI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have been informed that Mr. Peart and the Special Committee on Western Identity will be making a press release shortly in regards to our symbols. I will not make any comments as I do not wish to steal their thunder. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Ms. Smith.

Supplementary To Question 3-1(1): Political and Constitutional Development

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was wondering if the government has established a process for choosing a new name for the Northwest Territories. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Nahanni.

Further Return To Question 3-1(1): Political and Constitutional Development

HON. LANA NAHANNI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I stated earlier today in my statement, there will be a Premier's forum that will hear northerners' suggestions as to what the name of the Northwest Territories should be. These names can be conveyed to the people of the Northwest Territories who will participate in a public vote to determine what name it will be. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Final supplementary, Ms. Smith. Oral questions. Ms. Boucher.

Question 4-1(1): Role of Teachers

MS. BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, for a very long time now, students have been asking and wondering about their money for their education. It does not help students at all to learn from books and not from the real thing. For example, last year I have been doing modules and I could not understand what was going on because I am more used to the teacher teaching us. I was very confused and I still am about all of this. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Education if the program or curriculum of the teachers can be reviewed so that the teachers are actually going to be doing their job, which is to teach the students. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, Ms. Lemon.

Return To Question 4-1(1): Role of Teachers

HON. SHELLY LEMON: The curriculum in the Northwest Territories is constantly being reviewed. It is up to the regional education boards to employ teachers that are able to teach the various subjects. Performance appraisals of teachers are conducted on an annual basis for all teachers. Informal appraisals are done more frequently by the principal. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Ms. Boucher.

Supplementary To Question 4-1(1): Role of Teachers

MS. BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, can the Minister ensure that all Members of the committee including teachers, students and parents are involved in this review? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Lemon.

Further Return To Question 4-1(1): Role of Teachers

HON. SHELLY LEMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Review of the curriculum is an ongoing process. The department does this in cooperation with the western provinces and with the teachers and the communities of the NWT. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Ms. Boucher. Oral questions. Mr. Unka.

Question 5-1(1): Incremental Funding for Education Programs

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It is in relation to the funding allocated to education in the Northwest Territories.

With the ongoing increase in the number of students and the difficulty in recruiting teachers, the increase in costs of delivering current curriculum, why has the Minister of Finance not allotted far more dollars into the education in the Northwest Territories in the budget that was announced recently?

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister of Finance, Ms. Tam.

Return To Question 5-1(1): Incremental Funding for Education Programs

HON. ANDREA TAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The territorial government only has a limited amount of money or income. With this limited amount of money, we must fulfil all the functions of the territorial government. If we increase money to education, we have to remove money from some other area of government. I regret to inform the Member that most of our government programs have been cut to the bone. There is no fat left. We are not able to reallocate scarce funding to education without seriously compromising the safety of the residents of the Northwest Territories. There are roads, airports, hospitals and health centers that are required to be repaired and built. Health and safety programs would be affected. We cannot take this risk. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Mr. Babyn.

Question 6-1(1): Giant Arsenic Cleanup

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development. Madam Speaker, we have been hearing from people all over the north wanting to know what this government is doing to facilitate the cleanup of arsenic at Giant Mine in Yellowknife with the federal government. This issue affects all peoples in the north and procrastinating, hoping that some private sector company will purchase the mine and look after the cleanup, is unrealistic. This environmental problem has the potential to affect the lives of our grandchildren's grandchildren. We are people that benefit from this land and its resources. If this government turns a blind eye, we are letting down all people of this great territory. Madam Speaker, what I would like to know is, has the Minister developed a detailed plan to assist the federal government in the undertaking of this cleanup? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister responsible for Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Ms. Grandjambe.

Return To Question 6-1(1): Giant Arsenic Cleanup

HON. WANDA GRANDJAMBE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The department is coordinating with the federal government to ensure timely and effective cleanup of the mine. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Babyn.

Supplementary To Question 6-1(1): Giant Arsenic Cleanup

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This government needs to be a part of the solution and not part of the problem. Would the Minister be able to provide us with a detailed plan that will meet the needs of northerners to resolve this environmental disaster? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Grandjambe.

Further Return To Question 6-1(1): Giant Arsenic Cleanup

HON. WANDA GRANDJAMBE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Once the department and the federal authorities have concluded an effective cleanup plan, I will table the document for the Member's review. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Babyn.

Supplementary To Question 6-1(1): Giant Arsenic Cleanup

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the interest of all northerners, would the Minister consider establishing a task force comprised of the appropriate professionals to advise this government of potential solutions for the arsenic cleanup? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Grandjambe.

Further Return To Question 6-1(1): Giant Arsenic Cleanup

HON. WANDA GRANDJAMBE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I have advised the Member, a task force comprised of environmental cleanup specialists from the territorial and federal government is developing a strategy to cleanup the mine. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Final supplementary, Mr. Babyn.

Supplementary To Question 6-1(1): Giant Arsenic Cleanup

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Understanding that we must take control of our own destiny and that timing is of the essence, when will this task force and the subsequent recommendations be ready to demonstrate to our constituents this government's commitment to their well-being? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Grandjambe.

Further Return To Question 6-1(1): Giant Arsenic Cleanup

HON. WANDA GRANDJAMBE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am confident that the task force will, in a timely and effective manner, resolve the cleanup situation at Giant Mine. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Ms. Pascal.

Question 7-1(1): Fort McPherson Gym Extensions

MS. PASCAL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education in regard to the gymnasium at Chief Julius School. In 1995, our school was destroyed by fire. This was a great loss to our community, mainly the youth. In 1997, construction was finished on a new school and officially opened. However, the gymnasium was downsized, and this has created concerns among the youth and local people that use the gym for recreational purposes and community events.

The gymnasium should be expanded and here are some reasons why. On many occasions, there is overcrowding

because we do not have a stage. A temporary podium was built inside the gym to assist events such as Christmas concerts, graduation ceremonies, school plays, community events, and large gatherings. Madam Speaker, we would be able to host events such as regional soccer tournaments, Arctic Winter Games tryouts, various sporting events and regional fairs and tournaments.

Madam Speaker, if we had an extension, the community would have more involvement because there would be more space. Presently our gymnasium only can hold a certain amount of people, and others are forced to stand outside the gymnasium. A larger gym would certainly resolve all problems we experience every day. The youth and members of my community would benefit tremendously and once again be involved together as a whole. Madam Speaker, my question is, would it be possible to get an expansion to our school gymnasium in my community? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister responsible for Education, Culture and Employment, Ms. Lemon.

Return To Question 7-1(1): Fort McPherson Gym Extensions

HON. SHELLY LEMON: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I suppose that anything is possible. The size of gymnasium that a school has is dependent upon the number of students. The gymnasium that was built in Fort McPherson is the same size that any other community with the same number of students would receive. In the past there have been some communities that did fundraising so that they could build bigger and better gyms for their communities. Presently, we do not have plans to give the school in Fort McPherson an expansion to their gymnasium. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Mr. Peart.

Question 8-1(1): Yellowknife Homeless Situation

MR. PEART: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Madam Speaker, I have talked to many people about the homeless situation in the city of Yellowknife. This situation is as bad as any other, if not worse. This situation affects all of the people of Yellowknife. Madam Speaker, other communities may not have as many homeless or underprivileged people, but it is still a great concern in the north. What I want to know is, what steps is the Minister taking to fix this problem? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Chinna.

Return To Question 8-1(1): Yellowknife Homeless Situation

HON. JILL CHINNA: The department is currently working with the Housing Corporation to provide shelter for our homeless people in the Yellowknife area, as well as other communities. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Peart.

Supplementary To Question 8-1(1): Yellowknife Homeless Situation

MR. PEART: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The government needs to take action in this issue and resolve it. Would the Minister be able to supply us with the necessary funds and assistance to resolve this issue?

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Chinna.

Further Return To Question 8-1(1): Yellowknife Homeless Situation

HON. JILL CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are providing homeless people with social assistance, but there are also many other organizations and people that help the homeless. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Peart.

Supplementary To Question 8-1(1): Yellowknife Homeless Situation

MR. PEART: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is the Minister able to provide us with a group of professionals and go through the situation and report back to the government? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Chinna.

Further Return To Question 8-1(1): Yellowknife Homeless Situation

HON. JILL CHINNA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am willing to take your concerns to the department and once they conclude their findings I will report back to the Member. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Ms. Mantla.

Question 9-1(1): Road Between Rae and Yellowknife

MS. MANTLA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transportation. The road to Rae may be good to drive on, but there are a lot of curves and if it rains there are a lot of bumps and potholes as well. It is also slippery too. Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister how the road could be improved by making the road straight and with less curves to prevent future accidents? The road is about 40 years old and it follows the same old route. How many accidents have happened on the road to Rae in the last ten years? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister responsible for Transportation, Ms. Kimiksana.

Return To Question 9-1(1): Road Between Rae and Yellowknife

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In the past ten years there have been 55 vehicle accidents. Two people have died.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Ms. Mantla.

Supplementary To Question 9-1(1): Road Between Rae and Yellowknife

MS. MANTLA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, what is the department going to do to reduce the number of accidents on the road to Rae? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Kimiksana.

Further Return To Question 9-1(1): Road Between Rae and Yellowknife

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am advised that the road is being straightened as we speak and a paving program is underway. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Mr. Unka.

Question 10-1(1): Funding Allocated to Education

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It is in relation to the funding allocated to the education in the Northwest Territories. Madam Speaker, how many more dollars is the government going to put into the education budget? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister of Finance, Ms. Tam.

Return To Question 10-1(1): Funding Allocated to Education

HON. ANDREA TAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The government has increased the budget for the department by $3 million over the last year. As I said in my Minister's statement earlier today, we are hoping to generate new sources of income for the government. Increased taxes on alcohol will generate money to address the rising number of students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effect. When we generate more money, the government will do a review and put the money where it is most needed. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Supplementary, Mr. Unka.

Supplementary To Question 10-1(1): Funding Allocated to Education

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Does the Minister sincerely consider the dollar allocation of funds to education be increased once the review is completed? Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Ms. Tam.

Further Return To Question 10-1(1): Funding Allocated to Education

HON. ANDREA TAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I believe that once we generate more money for the government, we can do a review and put the money where it is most needed. If education is considered to be the most needy department, then the government will increase its funding. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Oral questions. Item 7, written questions. Ms. Smith.

ITEM 7: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Written Question 1-1(1): Project to Reconstruct Highway 3

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a written question directed to the Minister of Transportation. It is on the project to reconstruct Highway 3.

The road between Yellowknife and Rae has been a safety concern for many years. It is my understanding that the Department of Transportation will soon begin construction to pave and realign this portion of the highway. My written questions are:

1. How much money has been allocated to this project?
2. Over how many years will this project be undertaken?
3. How much money will be spent in each of these years?
4. Who are the contractors and for what portion of the contract have they been hired?
5. Also, will local preference be taken into consideration when contracts are awarded?
6. Who will be undertaking the right of way clearing of the highway?
7. Will the Department of Transportation use the same principles it used with the residents of Fort Providence, such as local aboriginals negotiating the right-of-way work on the portion of the highway near that community?
8. Will the majority of service work be done by local businesses?
9. Will heavy equipment operators with journeyman tickets be given first preference in being hired?
10. Will the GNWT ensure that the benefits of this project remain in the north and in the communities that are affected by this project?

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Written questions. Item 8, returns to written questions. Item 9, replies to opening address. Mr. Peart.

ITEM 9: REPLIES TO OPENING ADDRESS

Reply to Opening Address 1-1(1):

MR. PEART: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(Rap) I rise in the House to tell a great tale
'Bout youth in the north and how we do so well

Culture and language are to name but a few
Learning from our elders makes us believe and be true

The door to the future is through education
We all have the key to our own destination

Learn from us, we are a great teaching tool
Respect and understanding makes no one a fool

Adults of today, listen up, here is the lesson...
We are the leaders of tomorrow who will pay your pension!

We came here today to learn the ways
What we want to know is how well it pays

TV's and lights, visitors in the gallery
This must be a great job, cause look at that salary!

Madam Speaker, we do not dis the facts
The youth of today is where it is at! (Rap ends)

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Replies to opening address. Item 10, petitions. Ms. Nahanni.

ITEM 10: PETITIONS

Petition 1-1(1): Establishing a Biking Recreational Area

HON. LANA NAHANNI: Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of establishing a biking recreational area.

Madam Speaker, the petition contains 38 signatures and, Madam Speaker, the petitioners request:

We, the students of Thomas Simpson School in the community of Fort Simpson, wish to petition the Government of the Northwest Territories and all Members of the Legislative Assembly to establish a biking recreational area for the youth.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Petitions. Ms. Kimiksana.

Petition 2-1(1): Additional Funding for Librarian and Library Books

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of additional funding for librarian and library books.

Madam Speaker, the petition contains 26 signatures and, Madam Speaker, the petitioners request:

We the people of Holman, wish to petition the Government of the Northwest Territories and all Members of the Legislative Assembly and request support for additional funding for a librarian and library books in schools.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Petitions. Mr. Unka.

Petition 3-1(1): Education Funding

MR. UNKA: Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of education funding.

Madam Speaker, the petition contains 163 signatures and, Madam Speaker, the petitioners request:

We, the students from Diamond Jenness Secondary School, wish to petition the Government of the Northwest Territories and all Members of the Legislative Assembly to request additional funding for education needs.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Petitions. Mr. Peart.

Petition 4-1(1): A New Youth Recreating Facility

MR. PEART: Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of a new youth recreation facility.

Madam Speaker, the petition contains 90 signatures and, Madam Speaker, the petitioners request:

We, the constituents of Yellowknife, wish to petition the Government of the Northwest Territories and all the Members of the Legislative Assembly and request support for a new youth recreation facility. With support it will heighten morale among all youth and provide a healthy alternative to the streets.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Petitions. Ms. Boucher.

Petition 5-1(1): A New Recreation Centre for the Town of Fort Resolution

MS. BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of a new recreation centre for the town of Fort Resolution.

Madam Speaker, the petition contains 32 signatures and, Madam Speaker, the petitioners request:

We, the constituents of South Slave and the community of Fort Resolution, wish to petition the Government of the Northwest Territories and Members of the Legislative Assembly to request support for our recreation centre by September 1, 2000. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: Petitions. Ms. Tam.

Petition 6-1(1): Youth Employment

HON. ANDREA TAM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of youth employment.

Madam Speaker, the petition contains 44 signatures and, Madam Speaker, the petitioners request:

We, the youth of Yellowknife, wish to petition the Government of the Northwest Territories to encourage the creation of more summer jobs for youth by offering wage subsidies to local businesses. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Petitions. Mr. Babyn.

Petition 7-1(1): The Cleanup of Arsenic at the Giant Mine Site in Yellowknife

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition dealing with the matter of the cleanup of arsenic at the Giant Mine Site in Yellowknife.

Madam Speaker, the petition contains 71 signatures and, Madam Speaker, the petitioners request:

We, the constituents of Yellowknife Centre, in the community of Yellowknife, wish to petition the Government of the Northwest Territories and all Members of the Legislative Assembly to pursue options that will accelerate the cleanup of arsenic at Giant Mine. Also, we request the GNWT to develop a detailed plan for the cleanup and present it to the federal government. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Petitions. Madam Deputy Clerk.

Petition 8-1(1): Postal Delivery Services in Kakisa Lake

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Tanche): Madam Speaker, I would like to present a petition on behalf of the member for Deh Cho dealing with the matter of postal delivery services in Kakisa Lake.

Madam Speaker, the petition contains 21 signatures and, Madam Speaker, the petitioners request:

We, the constituents of the Deh Cho in the community of Kakisa Lake, wish to petition the Government of the Northwest Territories and all Members of the Legislative Assembly to request postal service here in Kakisa Lake, NWT.

MADAM SPEAKER: Petitions. Item 11, reports of standing and special committees. Ms. Pascal.

ITEM 11: REPORTS OF STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee Report 1-1(1): Official Symbols for the New Northwest Territories

MS. PASCAL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, as you and my colleagues are aware, one of the mandates of the Special Committee on Western Identity is to recommend official symbols for the new Northwest Territories. Our recommendations to date have been to keep the flower as the mountain avens, the bird as the gyrfalcon and the mineral as gold. In addition, we suggested adding a gemstone symbol, which would be the diamond.

The three symbols recommended for change were the mace, the flag and the coat of arms. The mace contract has been awarded, the design approved and manufacture is now underway. Madam Speaker, today I am pleased to announce that the committee is now launching the search for new designs for the flag and coat of arms. A colorfully animated brochure is being mailed to every household in the NWT over the next few weeks. It will also be available at municipal offices in every community, as well as on the NWT 99 Website. In addition, all schools in the NWT will receive special teachers kits to encourage entries from children.

The committee anticipates a large number of entries from people of all ages, as we have already received quite a few random submissions. The deadline for entries for both symbols is July 30, 1999. As with the mace design, the new flag and coat of arms designs will be kept confidential until the official unveiling at the first sitting of the 14th Legislative Assembly after the next territorial general election.

Madam Speaker, this concludes the report of the Special Committee on Western Identity. I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife South, that the committee's report be received and adopted. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

--Applause

Reports of standing and special committees. Item 12, reports of committees on the review of bills. Item 13, tabling of documents. Ms. Boucher.

ITEM 13: TABLING OF DOCUMENTS

Tabled Document 1-1(1): Youth Parliament Soccer Challenge

MS. BOUCHER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I would like to table the results of the Youth Parliament Soccer Challenge from Tuesday and I am sorry to say my team, Team South, failed in its bid for bragging rights in the Legislature. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Ms. Mantla.

Tabled Document 2-1(1): NWT '99 Catch the Spirit Brochure

MS. MANTLA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I have a document I wish to table. The document is the NWT '99 Catch the Spirit brochure on the new NWT Coat of Arms and NWT flag competitions that are being launched today. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Tabling of documents. Item 14, notices of motion. Mr. Unka.

ITEM 14: NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion 1-1(1): Consideration of Youth Parliament Issues

MR. UNKA: Thank you Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I give notice that on Tuesday, May 25, 1999, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore, I move seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Youth Parliament recommends that

the 13th Legislative Assembly earnestly consider the issues raised by Members of the Youth Parliament.

And further, that this Youth Parliament requests that the Honourable Speaker Simba formally transmit this resolution and a summary of the issues raised during the Youth Parliament to the Honourable Speaker Gargan.

And, at the appropriate time, I will seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Unka. Notices of motion. At this time we will take a short break.

-- Break

MADAM SPEAKER: I would like to call the House back to order. I trust you all had a good lunch. Item 15, notices of motion for first reading of bills. Ms. Kimiksana.

ITEM 15: NOTICES OF MOTION FOR FIRST READING OF BILLS

Bill 1: An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I give notice that on Tuesday, May 25, 1999, I will move that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notices of motion for first reading of bills. Item 16, motions. Mr. Unka.

ITEM 16: MOTIONS

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker I seek unanimous consent to waive the rules and to deal with my motion today. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Member for Hay River, Mr. Unka, is seeking unanimous consent to proceed with motion 1-1(1). Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Unka, you may proceed with your motion.

Motion 1-1(1): Consideration of Youth Parliament Issues

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, in consideration of the Youth Parliament issues,

WHEREAS the first Youth Parliament of the Northwest Territories represents youth from all regions of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS the Youth Parliament represents diverse interests representative of the Northwest Territories;

AND WHEREAS Members of the Youth Parliament were selected by schools and Members of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS Members of the Youth Parliament received support from their respective schools, communities and corporate sponsors;

AND WHEREAS Members of the Youth Parliament are familiar with the nature of their duties as representatives of their respective communities and regions;

AND WHEREAS Members of the Youth Parliament are now more well informed of the responsibilities of Members of the Legislative Assembly;

AND WHEREAS Members of the Youth Parliament are now more aware of issues on other communities and regions arising from their participation in the Youth Parliament;

NOW THEREFORE, I move seconded by the honourable Member for Yellowknife Centre, that this Youth Parliament recommends that the 13th Legislative Assembly earnestly consider the issues raised by Members of the Youth Parliament.

AND FURTHER, that this Youth Parliament requests that the Honourable Speaker Simba formally transmit this resolution and a summary of the issues raised during the Youth Parliament to the Honourable Speaker Gargan. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Unka. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Unka.

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I think that this motion is a good idea because it helps the youth of tomorrow and helps our voice be heard as youths. All of the issues that we are raising today and throughout the week that we worked on, I think that we should be heard by the rest of the MLAs. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: To the motion. Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, youth play an important role in the north and it is necessary for the youth to get involved. We have many good ideas and the people here this week think that our issues are important for the real Members of the 13th Legislative Assembly to consider. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

--Applause

Motions. Item 17, first reading of bills. Ms. Kimiksana.

ITEM 17: FIRST READING OF BILLS

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister for Transportation is seeking

unanimous consent to proceed with first reading of Bill 1, today. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Ms. Kimiksana, you may proceed.

Bill 1: An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the first time. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried, Bill 1 has had first reading. First reading of bills. Item 18, second reading of bills. Ms. Kimiksana.

ITEM 18: SECOND READING OF BILLS

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I seek consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Minister for Transportation is seeking consent to proceed with second reading of Bill 1, today. Do we have any nays? There are no nays. Ms. Kimiksana, you may proceed.

Bill 1: An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Thebacha, that Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, be read for the second time. Madam Speaker, this bill amends the Motor Vehicles Act to require bicyclists to wear helmets. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Bill 1 has had second reading and accordingly, the bill stands referred to the committee of the whole for today. Second reading of bills. Item 19, consideration in committee of the whole of bills and other matters. The Assembly will move into committee of the whole to consider Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, with Mr. Unka in the chair.

ITEM 19: CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF BILLS AND OTHER MATTERS

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): I call the committee to order. We are on Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act. Ms. Kimiksana do you have any opening comments?

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, Bill 1 will amend the Motor Vehicles Act to require the mandatory use of helmet for all people riding bicycles. Each year in Canada, many people suffer injuries while riding bicycles. Most of these injuries are not serious or life-threatening, but some of them are, Mr. Chairman. Head injuries sustained in accidents by people riding bicycles can result in death or long-term disabilities. Requiring helmets to be worn by bicycles would help prevent serious injuries and avoid unnecessary tragedy and cause medical treatment. I would be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have on this bill.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Madam Minister, would you like to bring in any witnesses?

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Yes, I would.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Does the committee agree the Minister may bring in witnesses?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Sergeant-at-Arms, escort the witnesses in please. Will the Minister introduce the witnesses?

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have with me today, Mr. Mark Spakowski, Mr. Kevin O'Keefe, Mr. Mark Aitkin.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you. General comments. Mr. Peart.

MR. PEART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What the Minister said is she wants to amend the bill. I just have a few comments on that. In small communities in the north, Yellowknife being the biggest one, we know that is not a very big town. It does not take very long to get anywhere. It is just a short bike ride away, so in such a small community, I do not think that there is really the need to wear mandatory helmets. In other small communities such as Rae or Rae Lakes, to get anywhere it is just a couple of minutes bike ride away. Just to put on a helmet to get from point A to point B real quick, to me, there is no need for it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): General comments. Ms. Smith.

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe, generally, the amendments are a good idea, but one of the problems that might happen is, if the bill is passed, enforcement might be a problem. I know there are a lot of people that probably would not wear a helmet. I am not quite sure what the penalty would be, a fine or something. If the bill is to prevent injuries, sooner or later they might get injured if they keep on not wearing a helmet. That just might be a problem, enforcement of it. That is all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Smith. General comments. Ms. Lemon.

HON. SHELLY LEMON: Than you, Mr. Chairman. If anything were to happen to anybody riding a bicycle, it would be better to wear a helmet to be safe than sorry because you never know what could happen. People who wear bicycle helmets are protected from getting paralyzed. If somebody were to get paralyzed, it will cost a lot of money to take care of this person, keep them in a home, and to always have somebody there to be with them will cost $75,000 to $105,000 to keep this one person alive for one year which would end up taking money from out of health care and everything else like this. We would have to get more money to health care to actually keep these people alive. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Lemon. General comments. Mr. Peart.

MR. PEART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to what Ms. Lemon said, keeping a person alive for a year after a bike accident, they said it would cost around $100,000. But other health problems in the NWT such as liver disease from alcoholism, smoking, lung cancer, it costs money to keep those people alive too. If putting a law on using bicycle helmets to keep spending this money on people, should the government put a ban on alcohol and smoking to keep them out of the hospital too, from spending money? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

--Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Peart. General comments. Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe that the bill put forward before us today is a necessary one. There seems to be a lot of support for this bill and that this bill's discussion is that it will be a necessity. I do, however, have some questions that I hope that the Minister and some of her assistants over there may be able to give me the answer to. My first question is, what are the exact numbers of people in the NWT who are injured or killed due to bicycle accidents each year? My next question deals with costs. Would the Minister be able to provide an estimate of the costs of funding to both enforce the law and to educate and publicize the new law? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Babyn. The question is to Ms. Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Statistics on the number of head injuries and thefts received by people riding bicycles are difficult to access. More often than not, records simply indicate a head injury but do not show whether this injury occurred while the individual was riding a bicycle. The department is looking at a way to get at this information. However, I think the more important point is that one serious head injury is too much if that injury could be prevented by wearing a helmet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Kimiksana. General comments. Mr. Peart.

MR. PEART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to the Minster's statement, she stated that the number of head injuries are not directly related to bicycle accidents. My question to the Minister is, should we put in a law using bicycle helmets as a scapegoat for the head injuries in the north? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Peart. General comments. Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: About my second question about costs, I did not really catch what the Minister said about that. I do not know if she answered it or not. Could she please go over that one again about the estimate of the cost of enforcing the law and educating and publicizing the law? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Babyn. Ms. Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Education, through the school boards, already delivers a number of awareness programs in NWT schools, as do the RCMP. It is my understanding that the RCMP and the Department of Education will join forces, sponsor an awareness program to advise students of the new law if and when it receives assent. There will be no additional cost to the GNWT. The RCMP who enforce the Motor Vehicles Act in most communities have stated their support I and willingness to take on the enforcement of it at no additional cost in the interest of public safety. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Kimiksana. General comments. Mr. Peart.

MR. PEART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For people who use bicycles as modes of transportation to work, school, et cetera, and if this bill is passed, what would happen if those people who just simply cannot afford a new helmet and the bike is the only mode of transportation that they have to and from school or work? My question to the Minister is, how would they enforce that if that person can do nothing for themselves, if they simply just cannot afford it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Peart. Ms. Kimiksana.

MS. KIMIKSANA: My assistant, Mr. O'Keefe, will answer for me.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Mr. O'Keefe.

MR. O'KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Minister has advised, there is going to be an awareness program that the Department of Education will put forward into all the schools. It is hoped that during that period of time, it is not as if they will have to go and buy a helmet tomorrow. There will be a period of time before the law is actually brought into force. It will give time for people to first of all be aware of the requirements, what kind of helmet they need and hopefully give them time to get the money together so that they can purchase it. I would also expect that in the first little while, when the law first comes into force, just as with other new laws, that there will be a certain amount of leniency and a number of warnings issued before actual tickets are handed out to people. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. O'Keefe. General comments. Ms. Smith.

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have a question for the Minister, would she say how the law would be enforced. Would there be fines for not wearing a helmet or what would happen after repeated offences. If someone refused to wear a helmet, would their bike be taken away? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Smith. Ms. Kimiksana.

HON MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Mr. Chairman, my witness, Mr. Aitken, will answer that.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Mr. Aitken.

MR. AITKEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I understand, the instructions from the Department of Transportation, after this bill receives assent, if this bill receives assent and before it is brought into enforce, a memo will be made to the summary of conviction procedures regulations which will create a ticket offence. In the greatest majority, if not, all cases the person who is caught riding a bicycle without a helmet by a peace officer, will be issued a ticket. That ticket will be in the range of a $50 fine. As Mr. O'Keefe indicated earlier we expect, as in most of these cases, that for the first month or two of the program after coming into force of these provisions, the by-law officers and police officers will be issuing warning tickets rather than actual tickets to offenders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Aitken. General comments. Mr. Peart.

MR. PEART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When a person wants to ride a bike, it is up to that person whether or not they want to protect themselves. Right now that is how it stands. Basically if that person chooses not to wear a helmet, then that person is taking the risk of a head injury. My question to the Minister is, should there be a law governing what people want and do not want? If they do not want to wear it, should there be a law saying you have to or should there be a law saying you do not have to if you do not want to, as it stands now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Peart. Ms. Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are other examples of this type of law, for instance seat belt safety. People make choices, laws are in effect to protect safety, public safety.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Kimiksana. General comments. Ms. Tam.

HON. ANDREA TAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In addition to looking at how many people have been killed, if there are actually people that have been killed because of riding a bike, we have to look at how they have been killed. If the majority has been killed by having their spinal column run over by a car, or like the injury has nothing to do with their head, then I do not see it has anything to do with the helmet. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Tam. General comments on the bill. Ms. Chinna.

HON. JILL CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I think people should be responsible for their own safety. The police or whoever is enforcing this law should have other serious crimes to attend to instead of riding around and checking and making sure everybody is wearing their helmet. I have a question too. If they make this into a law, will the helmets be mandatory for rollerblading and skateboarding too?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Chinna. Ms. Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: I will let Mr. Aitken answer that.

MR. AITKEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As drafted the act only applies to bicycles. There are other provisions of the act that have safety rules for rollerskates, for sleds and skis on the highways, but this particular rule only applies to bicycles and it is not intended, at this point, to expand it further. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Aitken. General comments. Ms. Chinna.

HON. JILL CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the difference between wearing a helmet for biking and not wearing one for rollerblading or skateboarding?

--Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Chinna. Ms. Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: I will ask Mr. Aitken to answer that.

MR. AITKEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess one of the fundamental distinctions is that a bicycle is already defined as a vehicle under the Motor Vehicles Act. There are rules of the road that apply to bicycles already. While rollerskates and skis and their use on the road is regulated, it is only a small subset of the general act, but the rules of the road that all drivers have to obey apply equally to the riders of bicycles now and they do not to the users of skateboards and rollerskates. Therefore, it was felt it would be more in keeping with the nature of the existing act to restrain this particular requirement to the riders of bicycles. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Aitken. General comments. Ms. Lemon.

HON. SHELLY LEMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to comment on what Mr. Peart said about laws, and if this was not a law, and this will protect people, what would happen if there were no laws? Everything would be out of hand. There are laws to protect people, which, this will be a law, hopefully to protect people from actually getting injured. If this was not a law then if people did not have to wear bicycle helmets, would a two year old be able to make the decision to actually wear a helmet or not?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Lemon. To remind the Members, please address your fellow Members as Mr., Ms., or honourable Member. General comments. Mr. Peart.

MR. PEART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding what my honourable colleague, Ms. Lemon, said. About the two year old making the decision for themselves. As you know, a two year old cannot really comprehend between what is right and what is wrong, that is the parent's decision. The parent needs to, be the police of their household and say, well you are just starting out on a bike and you should wear a helmet. The people that have been riding for however many years that they have, if that is to say that, will this person say he is a professional biker and he knows exactly what he is doing. Should there be a law saying, well I guess you are going to have to wear a helmet because we say so, is that really a right decision? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Peart. General comments. Ms. Chinna.

HON. JILL CHINNA: I have a question. Have they considered having the law only up to a certain age, like ten, until a person knows how to ride the bike properly?

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Ms. Chinna. Question for Madam Minister, Ms. Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: I will ask Mr. Spakowski to answer the question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Mr. Spakowski.

MR. SPAKOWSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The department looked at the statistics on deaths and injuries that were available and concluded that many of the head injuries involving cyclists occurred to adult cyclists as well as to young cyclists. So, a decision was made that this law should extend to cyclists of all ages and the law is not limited to any particular age.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Spakowski. General comments. Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a short question. I was wondering if the Minister would consider, rather than enforcing helmets, maybe offering some sort of training program for the youth of the north to train them about bicycle safety? Thank you.

--Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Babyn. Question for Minister Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: I will ask Mr. O'Keefe to answer that question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Mr. O'Keefe.

MR. O'KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are safety programs that are being delivered now. It is anticipated that the new requirements for mandatory helmets would just be an added part of that program and possibly even stepping up, for a short period of time, the number of campaigns that are offered in schools to really make sure that the message gets out. I think I would like to say too, the department realizes that there is a dilemma between the personal choices and the setting of standards for safety and the protection of the public. Really the bottom line is to prevent unnecessary injuries. We cannot prevent all injuries, but certainly if everybody wore a helmet there would be less people injured out there. That is the bottom line. We should also be aware that, even in the case of an injury that does not result in permanent disability, the cost to the health care system can be extremely high just to treat somebody who maybe has a severe concussion and they have to be shipped out to Edmonton for neurological tests. The cost of treating that one individual can run up in the thousands of dollars and this is what I think, we see as an unnecessary burden on the health system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. O'Keefe. General comments. Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From my friends I have learned that you can tell them tell them, tell them, and sometimes they just do not listen. Their parents tell them to wear helmets, their friends tell them to wear helmets, their teachers tell them to wear helmets, but they do not listen. What does the Minister intend to do if people do not obey the law, if they continue to refuse it, how strict will the penalties go to enforce this law? Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Babyn. Question to Ms. Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Aitken will answer this question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Mr. Aitken.

MR. AITKEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I indicated in response to an earlier question, the intention is to make this a ticket offence under the Summoning Conviction and Procedures Act. While it is true that a peace officer could elect not to issue a ticket and to, in fact, lay a charge which could have a mandatory penalty of up to $1,000 and six months in jail, the fact is that such an event would never happen. In each and every case a ticket would be issued to the offender. I cannot conceive in any circumstances where a person would ever end up in jail for refusal to where a helmet. As a matter of fact the one jurisdiction in Canada that does have mandatory helmet legislation, which is British Columbia, our recent enquiries have shown that no one has ever been actually charged in court. In each and every case in British Columbia for the past four years a ticket has been issued to the offender rather than an actual charge that would bring them to court. That would certainly be the intention of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Justice here in the Northwest Territories as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Aitken. General comments. Mr. Peart.

MR. PEART: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a general comment. If you look at all the other provinces population compared to ours, there are a lot more people in other provinces than there is here. Especially since division there is a lot less people in the Northwest Territories now. You could say if a person wanted to walk outside, walk uptown barefoot if they wanted to, should there be a law governing saying you have to wear shoes just in case your feet get hurt, because then that might cost the government money. That is basically what they are saying, the same thing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

--Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Peart. General comments. If agreed, no further comments. Does the committee agree to clause by clause review of the bill. Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: I would like the Minister to clarify whether or not this project will cost the government any money at all. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Babyn. Mr. Kimiksana.

HON. MELANIE KIMIKSANA: Mr. O'Keefe will take this question.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Mr. O'Keefe.

MR. O'KEEFE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The simple answer is no. Certainly there will be additional duties that the RCMP and by-law officers will have to take on, the Department of Education will be doing some extra work on the information campaign. Overall it is determined that all of this can be done within the existing resources that are in the department. The RCMP have expressed their strong support for this in the interest of public safety and they do not anticipate any additional cost for enforcing it. They are glad to do it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. O'Keefe. General comments. Does the committee agree that we go clause by clause to review the bill? Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you. Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, clause 1. Agreed?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you. Ms. Smith.

MS. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I request a recorded vote on clause 2. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): A recorded vote has been requested on clause 2. All those in favour of clause 2, please stand. Thank you. All those opposed to clause 2, please stand. Thank you.

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Ms. Tanche): Ms. Tam, Ms. Chinna, Ms. Pascal, Ms. Mantla, Ms. Boucher, Ms. Smith, Mr. Babyn, Mr. Peart.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): All those abstaining, please stand. Thank you. The results on the recorded vote are: for, zero, against, 8, abstentions, zero. Clause 2 is defeated.

--Applause

Does the committee agree that Bill 1, is not ready for third reading? Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, although there is not enough support for a territorial law to require the mandatory use of helmets while riding bicycles, I would like to suggest, that perhaps each individual community should be given the power to decide for itself if they want bicyclists to wear helmets.

--Applause

In other words, rather than enacting a territorial law, we can give the communities the power to enact municipal by-laws on this matter. They can then make the by-laws or not as they see fit. Therefore, I would like to make a motion.

Committee Motion 1-1(1): Amend Section 347(1) of the Motor Vehicles Act

Mr. Chairman, I move that this committee recommends that the government develop and introduce a bill to amend section 347(1) of the Motor Vehicles Act to provide municipal governments with the authority to make by-laws regarding the use of helmets for people riding bicycles.

--Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Babyn. The motion is in order. To the motion. Mr. Babyn.

MR. BABYN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think this is a good idea, as you can tell from just this Assembly, all the different communities have different perspective and views about this bill. I suppose that it would only be fitting that each community is allowed to make their own decision about bicycle helmets. Thank you.

--Applause

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): Thank you, Mr. Babyn. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried.

--Applause

Does the committee agree that Bill 1 is concluded?

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

CHAIRMAN (Mr. Unka): I would like to thank the witnesses and I will rise and report progress.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: The House will come back to order. We are on item 20, report of committee of the whole. Mr. Unka.

ITEM 20: REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MR. UNKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, your committee has been considering Bill 1, An Act to Amend the Motor Vehicles Act, and would like to report progress with one motion being adopted and that Bill 1 is not ready for third reading. Madam Speaker, I move that the report of the committee of the whole be concurred with. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, seconded by Mr. Peart. The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is carried. Item 21, third reading of bills. I understand that the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories is prepared to enter the Chamber and address the Assembly. Mr. Clerk, would you please proceed to escort the Commissioner into the Chamber.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: Thank you, please be seated. Madam Speaker, Madam Premier, Ministers and Members. It gives me great pleasure to be in the Chamber today and to thank you for permitting me the opportunity to address this, the first Northwest Territories Youth Parliament.

--Applause

I have watched with interest and heard the debate and discussions that have taken place today and each of you should be proud of what you have accomplished. If I might be permitted, your insight and maturity will, I am sure, be noticed by the Members of the Assembly that you have represented throughout the week and in the sitting of the Legislature today. I hope that the experience you have gained this week will enable you to go back to your community and share, with your schools and your families a better understanding of the consensus system of government in the Northwest Territories. I know Members will have learned from what you have said today and I hope you have learned from this experience. I am sure that the current Members of the Legislative Assembly, some of them anyway, are very relieved that none of you are of voting age, because I am sure if you were to run in the next general election you would give each of them a good run for their money. I am encouraged that you feel that the Youth Parliament should continue in the years ahead so that more of our future leaders can gain an insight into being an elected leader in the NWT.

On a personal note, I am sure you would like to join me in wishing happy 15th birthday to the honourable Member from Yellowknife Frame Lake, Ms. Andrea Tam. Happy birthday.

--Applause

I would be remiss if I did not mention certain individuals and companies that, without their hard work and support, this Youth Parliament would not have been the success it was. There are a number of individuals that were involved in the initial concept of a Youth Parliament and the subsequent development of the program. These individuals are staff of the Clerk's Office; particularly Ronna Bremer, Public Relations Officer, Laurell Graf, Research Analyst and Ben Nind, Executive Assistant to the Speaker. These individuals are to be commended for the part they have played in the success of your first Youth Parliament.

--Applause

A number of other individuals from the Legislative Assembly, the Executive Offices and the Department of Justice who have worked with you during this week should also be recognized. They are Doug Schauerte, Kevin O'Keefe, Heather Riviere, Mark Aitken, Erin MacDonald and Roslyn Semjanovs. Speaker Gargan and Members of the Legislative Assembly should also be thanked for working with the youth who represented their constituencies today. I would ask all of you to show your appreciation to these individuals.

--Applause

I also understand that an educational experience like this can be expensive. The following companies who provided support in sponsoring this first Youth Parliament should be commended and thanked. These are: Canadian North, Northwestern Air Lease, Polar Bowl Bowling, YK Direct Charge Co-op, Quality Furniture, Office Compliments, Pido Productions, Mayor and City of Yellowknife, Lake Awry Cap and Crests, Marlin Yellowknife Travel, Northern Fancy Meats, Elections Northwest Territories, Department of Resources, Wildlife and Economic Development, Department of Transportation, NWT Housing Corporation, First Air, Air Tindi, Raven Tours, Javaroma, Inidt, Pizza Hut and all of the MLAs.

I understand that despite the various opposing positions you have held today in this Assembly, that you have made new friends that I know will last forever and that the Youth Parliament has provided you with an opportunity to get to know fellow students from different parts of this wonderful territory we live in. Thank you all for providing me the opportunity to address you today and I hope that you will remember this experience with smiles on your faces and laughter in your hearts. Thank you.

--Applause

MADAM SPEAKER: Item 22, orders of the day. Mr. Clerk.

ITEM 22: ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLERK OF THE HOUSE (Mr. de Klerk): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, the orders of the day for the new millennium are:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motion
15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

20. Report of Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

MADAM SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This first Youth Parliament stands adjourned to the new millennium.

--Applause

--ADJOURNMENT